

Bankruptcy Judge Recruitment Information¹

1. What is the current salary for the job? What salary increases are anticipated?

Answer: Current salary is \$160,080. Salary increases for judges are passed by Congress and approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Bankruptcy judge salaries are set by Congress to equal 92% of the salary of a United States district judge (\$174,000).

Chief Justice Roberts has made salary restoration a top priority. Administrative Office (AO) Director James C. Duff continues to work with the Congressional Leadership to pass salary restoration.

2. What disability benefits are available? What survivor's benefits are available?

Answer: Both disability and survivor's benefits are available. See AO Publication "Retirement Benefits for Bankruptcy Judges and Magistrate Judges" dated May 2000. The benefits depend on which retirement system the bankruptcy judge is enrolled in. The three (3) retirement systems are:

- Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), 5 U.S.C. §§ 8331-8351
- Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), 5 U.S.C. §§ 8401-8479
- Judicial Retirement System (JRS), 28 U.S.C. § 377

Also, a bankruptcy judge may acquire survivor coverage for his or her spouse and eligible children by participating in the Judicial Survivors' Annuities System (JSAS), but must elect to participate in that program within six months of appointment to office, within six months of marriage, or within six months of elevation to a higher court.

3. What savings/benefit plans are available? (e.g., TSP, SHPS, Health, Dental/Vision, etc.)

Answers:

A) Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is the only retirement savings plan available, which is similar to a 401(k). You may contribute up to the IRS Limit (For 2009, \$16,500). If age 50 or older, you may also make TSP Catch-Up Contributions (for 2009, \$5,500). For FERS, there are matching government contributions up to 5% of salary. For CSRS and JRS, there is no government matching.

B) Federal Employment Health Benefits (FEHB) program. Health Benefits are offered through the FEHB program run by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). There are national and local providers that participate in the program. Bankruptcy judges premiums are deducted on a pre-tax basis once a month. The government pays approximately 72% of the average premium. Bankruptcy judges have 60 days from entrance on duty to enroll in a FEHB plan and can enroll in a self-only or self and family enrollment plan.

C) Judiciary Flexible Benefit Programs (maintained by SHPS). Bankruptcy judges have 60 days from date they receive Flexible Benefits information to enroll in the Flexible Benefit Programs.

- 1) Premium Payment Plan (pretax health benefit insurance).
- 2) Health Care Reimbursement Account (pre-tax dollars from your salary to cover eligible health-care expenses not covered by any medical, dental, or vision care plan).
- 3) Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (pre-tax dollars from your salary to cover eligible dependent-care expenses).

¹The information contained in this document is based on information available to the Office of the Circuit Executive as of October 15, 2009. It is subject to change.